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STAR WARS™ DOCTOR APHRA





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Black Krrsantan



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APHRA

Book I, Part I

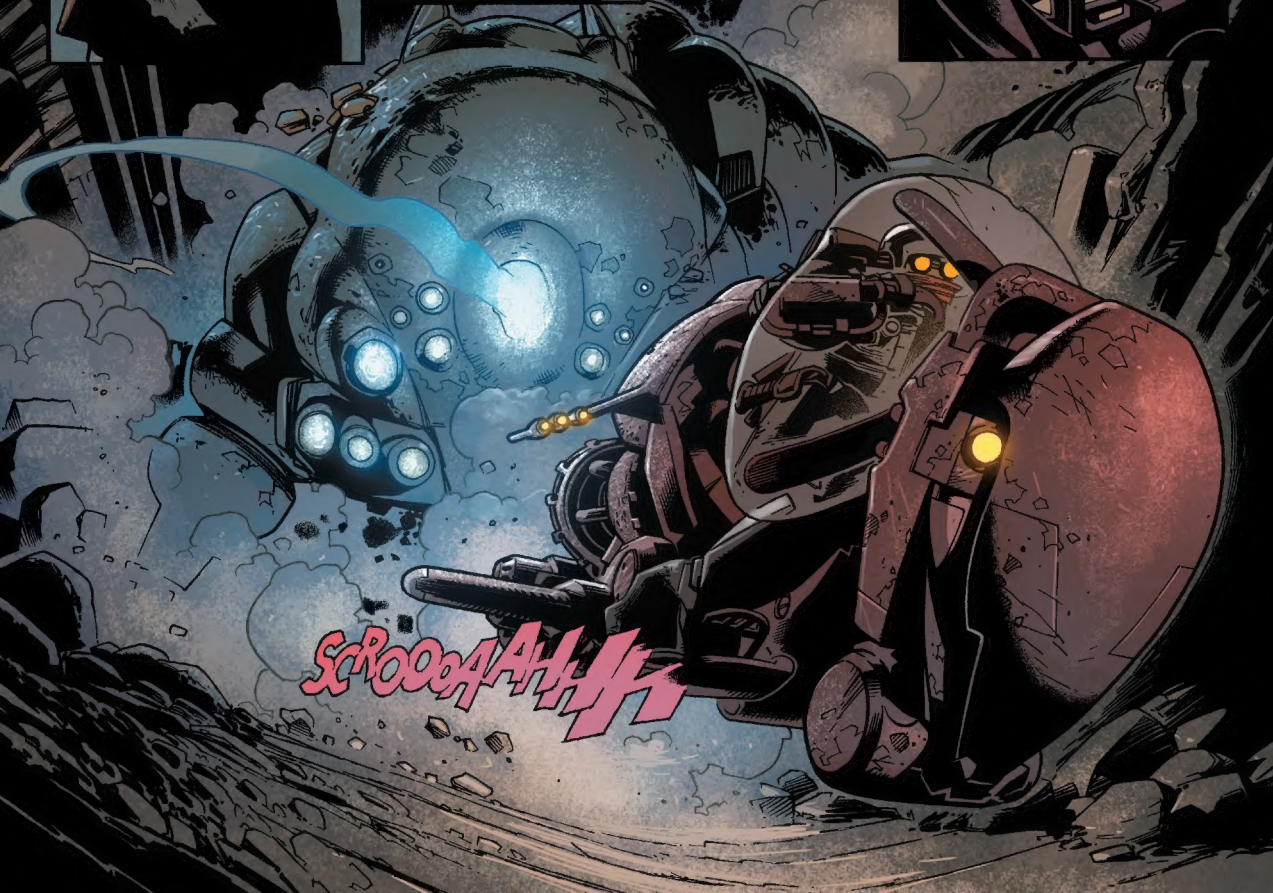
It is a period of opportunity. In a galaxy oppressed by the cruelty of Imperial forces, there is little hope for the future. But for those used to operating on the fringes, there is much potential for profit.

Rogue archaeologist Doctor Aphra is no stranger to risk in the pursuit of both credits and thrills; from her recent acquisition of a pair of homicidal droids, to her ever-increasing debt to Wookiee warrior Black Krrsantan, and most of all, her secret work for Darth Vader, Imperial enforcer and Dark Lord of the Sith.

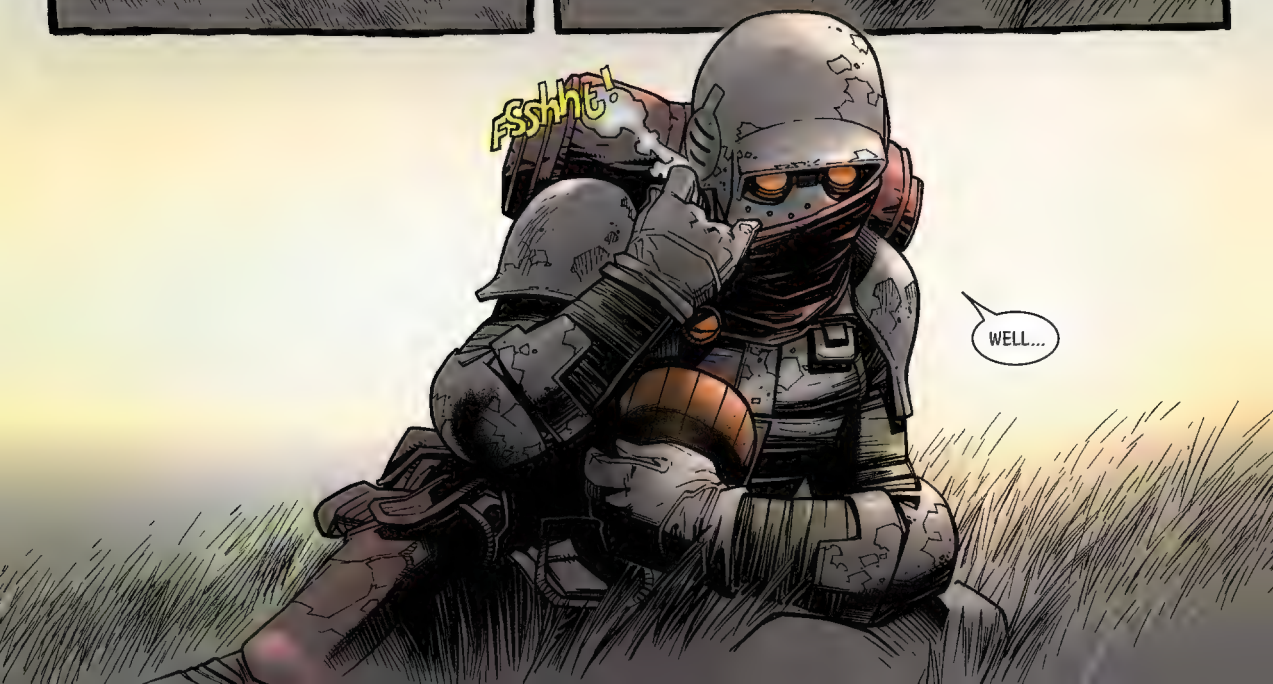
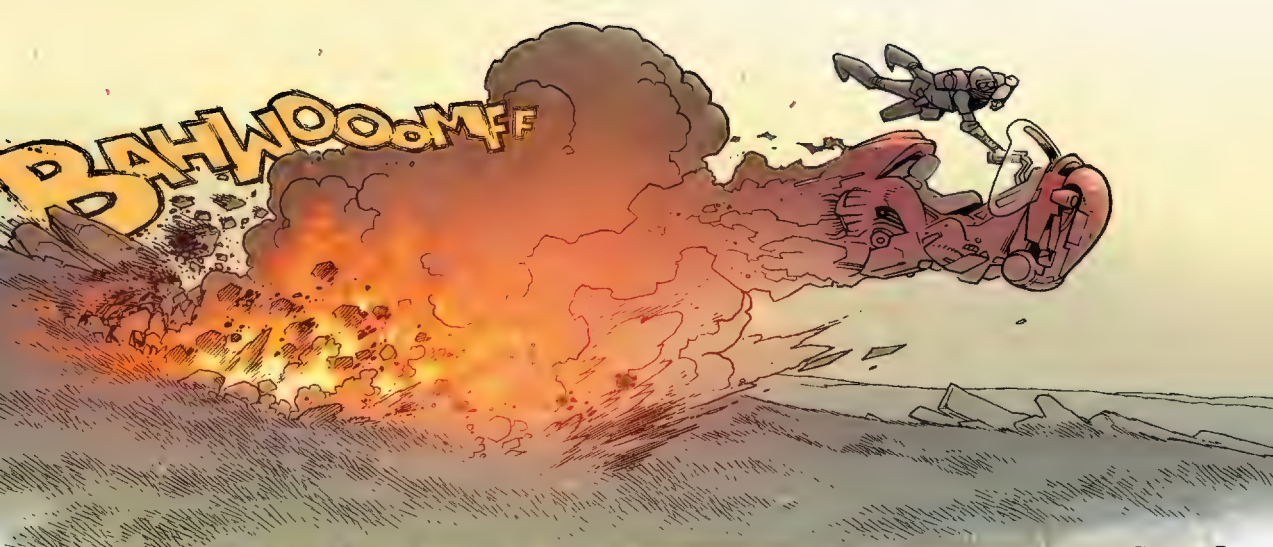
Now, having successfully faked her own death at Vader's hands, Aphra is back to doing what she does best: locating and liberating rare artifacts, droid and Wookiee companions by her side....

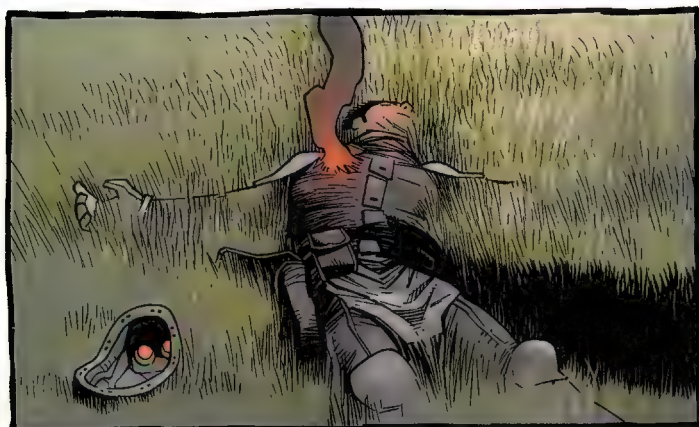
Beneath The
Cosmatanic Steppes,
The Outer Rim.







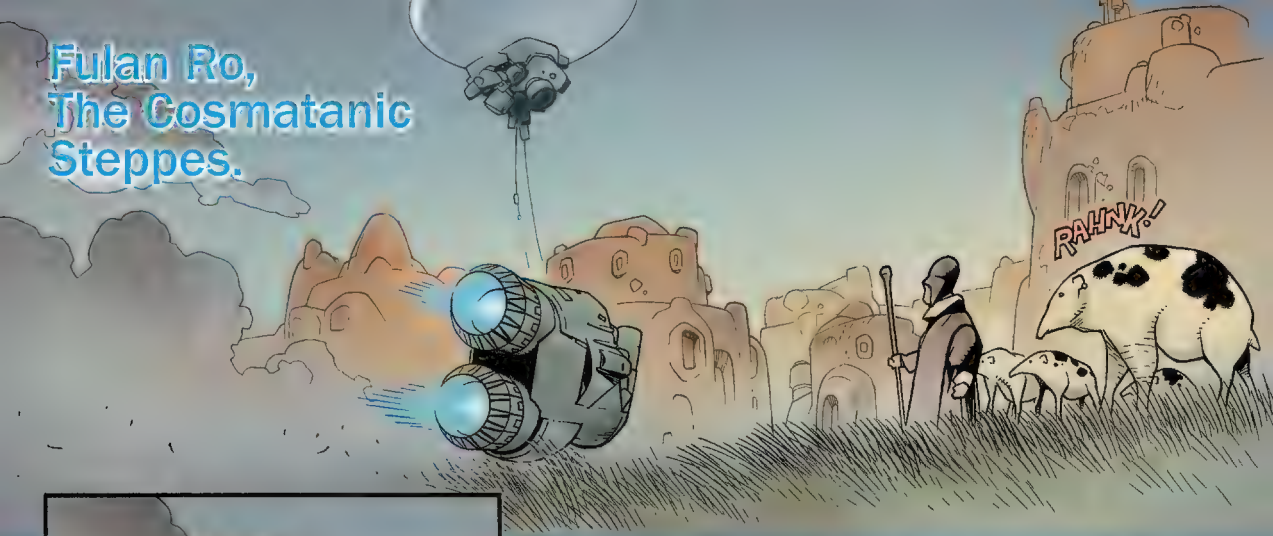




STAR WARS

DOCTOR APHRA

Fulan Ro,
The Cosmatanic
Steppes.



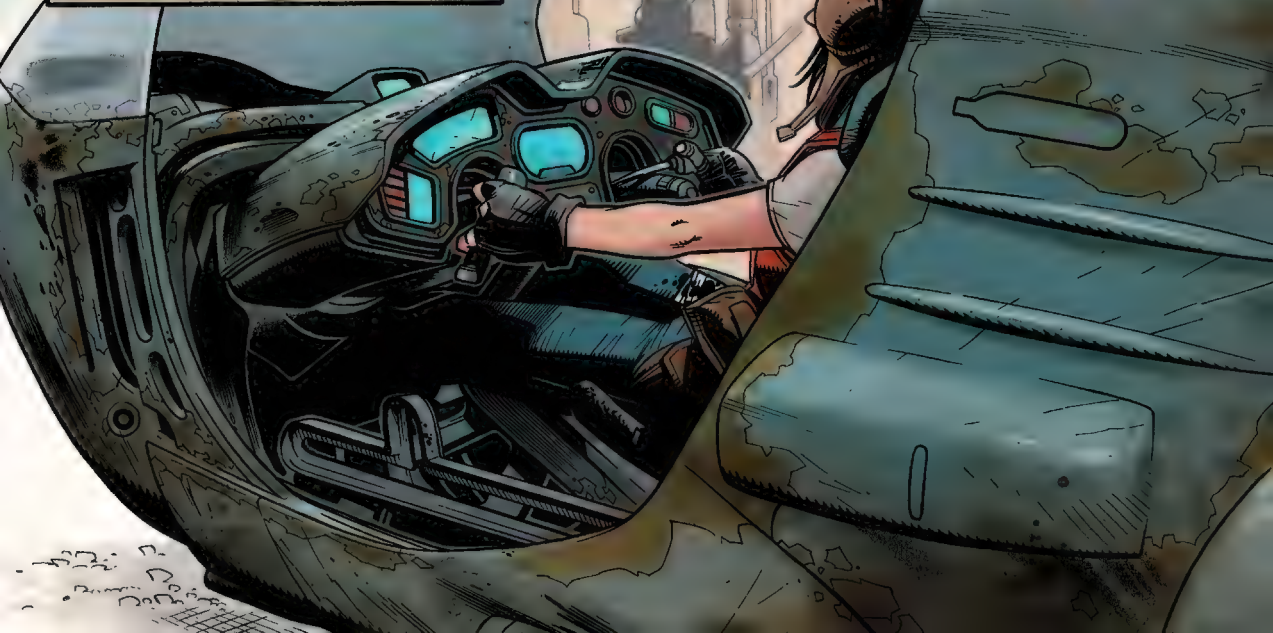
RAHNY!



OH, MY.



HELLO,
BEAUTIFUL.



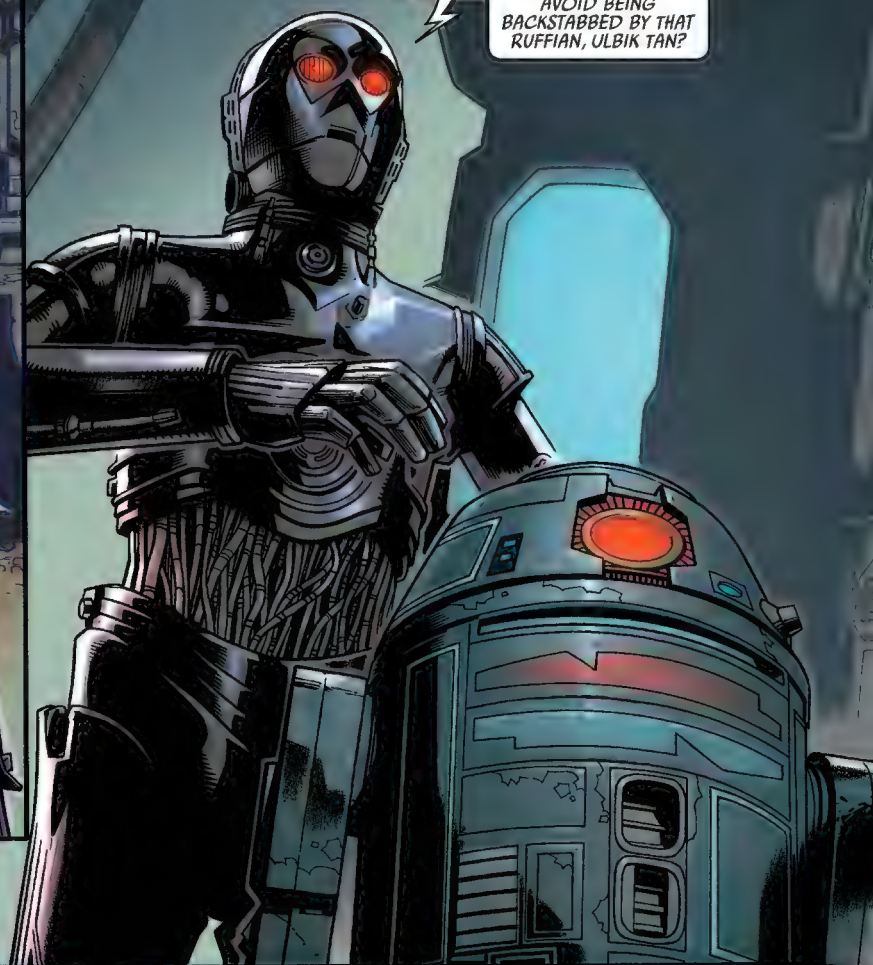
Bleep!

OH, YES, SHE'S ALIVE.
I DO INDEED OWE
YOU MONEY.

NO NEED
TO GLOAT,
BEETEE.

MASTER
APHRA!

I TAKE IT BY YOUR
CONTINUED BREATHING
YOU MANAGED TO
AVOID BEING
BACKSTABBED BY THAT
RUFFIAN, ULBIK TAN?



OH, NO.
HE BACKSTABBED
ME AND LEFT ME
FOR DEAD. BUT
I WASN'T!

THEN I
BACKSTABBED
HIM AND LEFT HIM
FOR DEAD. BUT
HE IS!



AND I'VE
PICKED UP A
SOUVENIR!





OH, EXCELLENT,
MASTER. THAT
IS A BEAUTIFUL
PIECE...

IT FEELS STRANGE
TO ACTUALLY BE
DEALING IN ARTIFACTS
AGAIN. THIS IS AN OBJECT OF
GENUINE CULTURAL
IMPORTANCE.

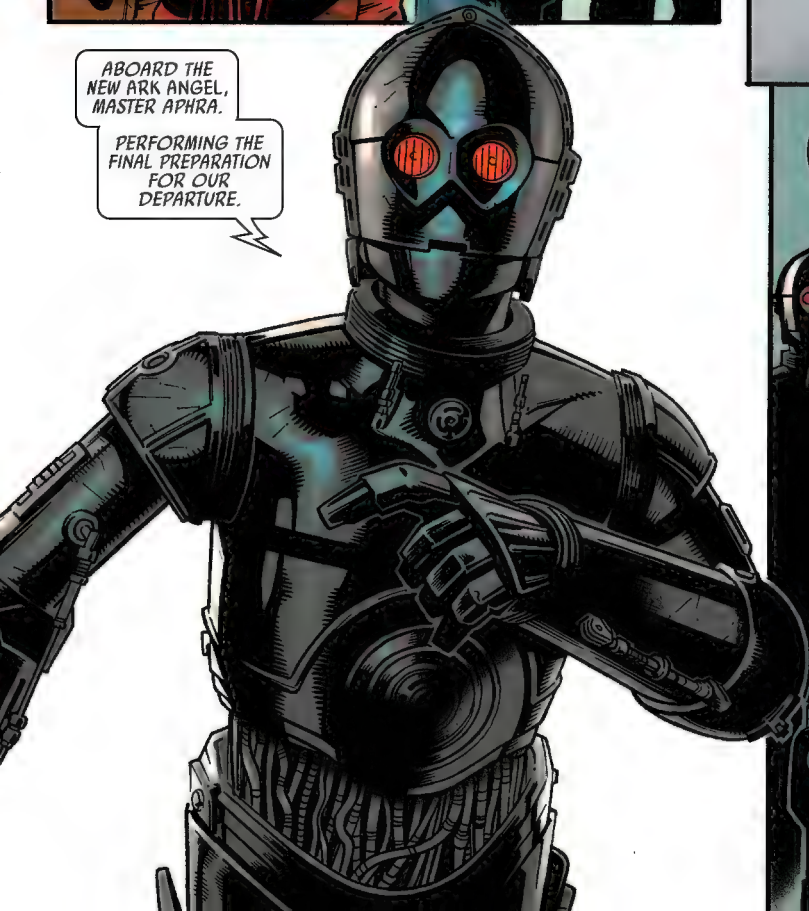


STEALING--
I MEAN,
RECOVERING--
SOMETHING THAT **CAN'T**
BE USED TO KILL
PEOPLE IS KINDA
NOVEL.

BLEEP!

QUITE, BEETEE.
WE HAVE TO
DISAGREE,
MASTER APHRA.

IT'D SUFFICE
AS A FAIRLY
STURDY
BLUDGEON.

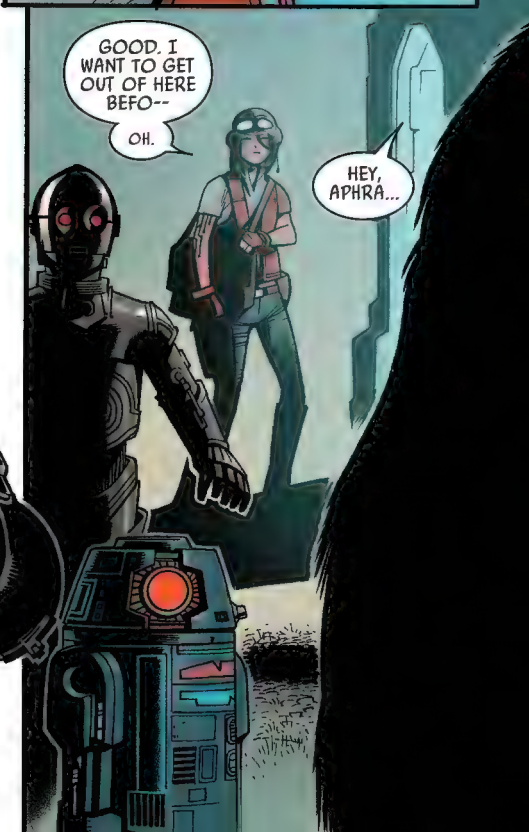


ABOARD THE
NEW ARK ANGEL,
MASTER APHRA.

PERFORMING THE
FINAL PREPARATION
FOR OUR
DEPARTURE.



GUYS,
KNOCK IT
OFF.
WHERE'S
KRRSANTAN?



GOOD. I
WANT TO GET
OUT OF HERE
BEFO--

OH.

HEY,
APHRA...



...DON'T YOU
OWE THE FINE
ORGANIZATION I
REPRESENT THE FIRST
PAYMENT ON YOUR
COLLECTION OF
SECONDHAND
BOLTS?



OH, GREAT.
I'LL STALL.

GET
KRRSANTAN
OUT HERE.



HEY,
SOO-TATH!
YOU'RE
LOOKING
GOOD!

LOVE THE
HAT. IS IT
NEW?

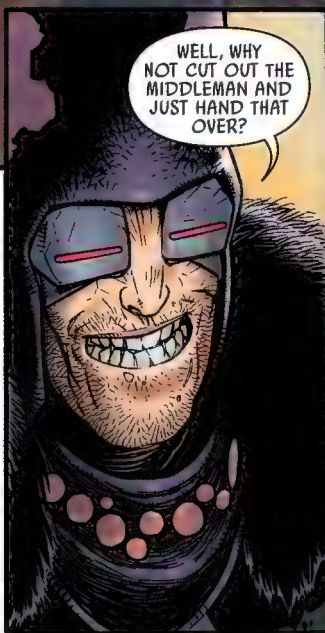


YOU CAN'T CHARM YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS, APHRA.

I'M NOT TRYING TO GET OUT OF PAYING! YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I VALUE OUR WORKING RELATIONSHIP.

I OWE YOU-- IN A METAPHORICAL AS WELL AS THE VERY LITERAL SENSE THAT BRINGS YOU THREE LOVELY GENTLEMEN CALLING.

I'M OFF TO SELL THE ARTIFACT I'VE RECOVERED, AND WHEN I'M BACK, THE SYNDICATE WILL HAVE THEIR MONEY!



WELL, WHY NOT CUT OUT THE MIDDLEMAN AND JUST HAND THAT OVER?



NOT A GOOD IDEA. THIS ISN'T LIKE PAWNING STOLEN STARSHIP PARTS. IF YOU DON'T HAVE ARCHAEOLOGIST ACCREDITATION YOU'D GET 0.2% OF ITS VALUE, TOPS.

I CAN GET BACK WITHIN THE WEEK--HELL, IT COULD SELL INSTANTLY, AND I'LL BE BACK TOMORROW.



AND IF IT SELLS FOR AS MUCH AS I THINK IT WILL, WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT A PAYMENT...

...WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE WHOLE LOAN IN ONE GO!



HMM. THEN I THINK WE'LL TAKE IT AND FIND AN ARCHAEOLOGIST OF OUR OWN TO SELL IT.

HAND IT OVER.

I'M BEGINNING TO SUSPECT THAT YOU MAY NOT HOLD OUR WORKING RELATIONSHIP IN THE SAME HIGH ESTEEM AS I DO.

I AM HURT, SOO-TATH.



SORRY,
MY MISTAKE.
TRICK OF THE
LIGHT.
IT WAS
THE MOO--



GGGRRRRKHHH!

ON THE OFF CHANCE YOU AREN'T
FLUENT IN WOOKIEE, THAT'S A
COLORFUL DESCRIPTION OF WHAT
THIS BOWCASTER WILL DO TO YOU
IF YOU DON'T REFRAIN FROM
DISMEMBERING MASTER APHRA.

NOW, I
ALSO OWE BLACK
KRRSANTAN A LOT OF
MONEY AND HE'S NOT
GOING TO LET YOU
ENDANGER HIS
INVESTMENT.

YOU STILL
NEED TO
PAY US.

OKAY--
WANT TO
WAGER ON THE
PAYMENT?

MY BIG AND
FURRY VERSUS
YOURS. NO WEAPONS.
DOUBLE OR
QUITS.

HMM. OKAY,
WHY
NOT--



WHUMP
CRUMP
WHOK!!





I'M SORRY--
I'LL ADD A LITTLE
EXTRA TO THE NEXT
PAYMENT TO GET YOUR
GIGORANS FIXED UP
WHEN I GET
BACK.

AND I WILL
BE BACK.
TRUST ME!

I'LL BE
HERE AND
WAITING, APHRA.
JUST HURRY.

WE ALL
KNOW YOU'VE
BEEN HIDING
FROM IMPERIAL
ATTENTION...

...IT'D BE A
SHAME IF THEY
HAPPENED TO FIND
OUT YOU WERE
HERE.

HOW
RUDE.



PFFT. ONLY
VADER ACTUALLY
CARES, AND IT'S NOT LIKE
HE'S LOOKING FOR ME.
STILL...IT'S PROBABLY
AN EMPTY THREAT.

HOW
LONG UNTIL
YOU CAN GET THE
ARC ANGEL II
UP AND
RUNNING?

HHHHHHH!

REALLY?
HOURS?
GREAT.

MASTER
APHRA...

...IF WE DO HAVE
A LITTLE SPARE
TIME, BEETEE AND
I NEED TO PICK
UP SOME
SUPPLIES FROM
TOWN. MAY WE
BE EXCUSED?



SURE,
GUYS.
BRING ME
BACK AN
ICE POP.

CERTAINLY,
MASTER.

OH, THAT
GOES RIGHT
THROUGH
ME.

BETTER GO
AND FEED THE
SARLACC...



AHEM.

MAY WE
HAVE YOUR
ATTENTION FOR
A FEW MOMENTS,
PLEASE?



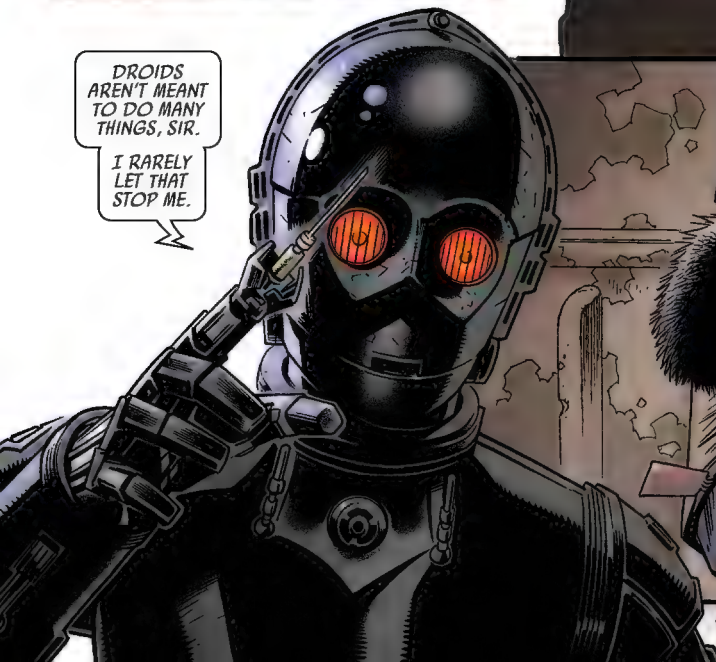
WH--
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING HERE?
GOT AN OIL
LEAK?

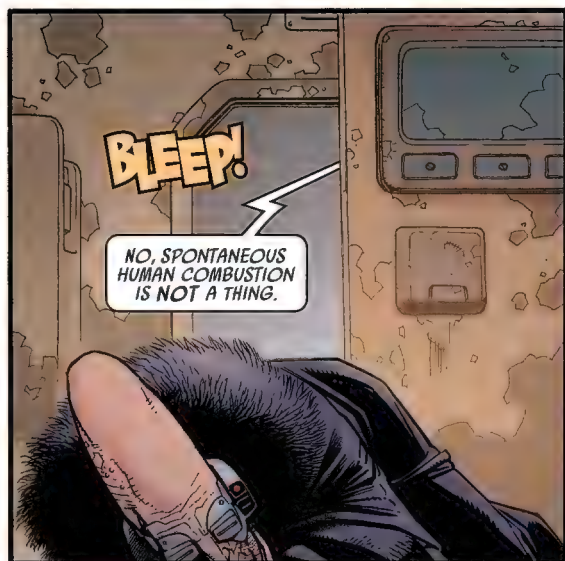
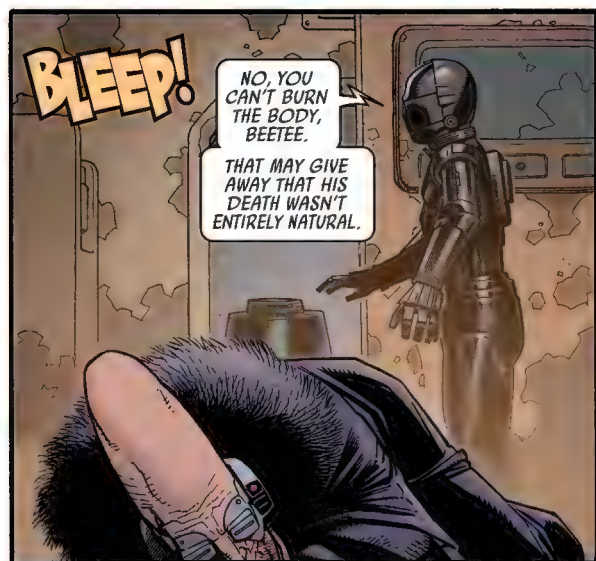
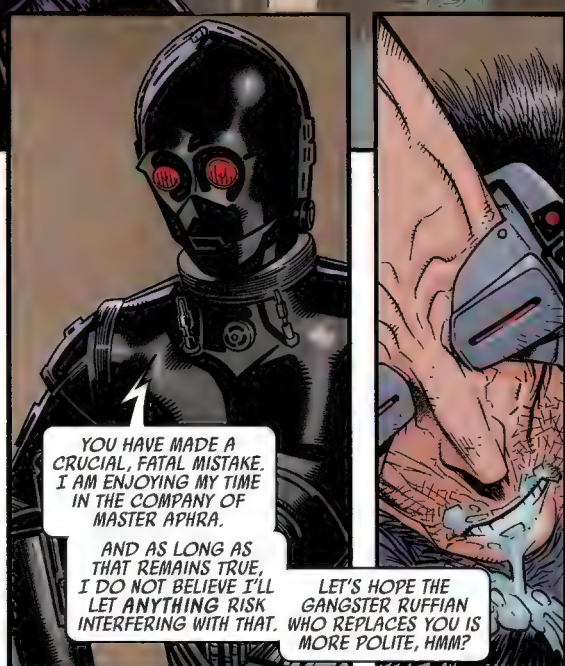
DROIDS
AREN'T MEANT
TO BE BACK
HERE.



DROIDS
AREN'T MEANT
TO DO MANY
THINGS, SIR.

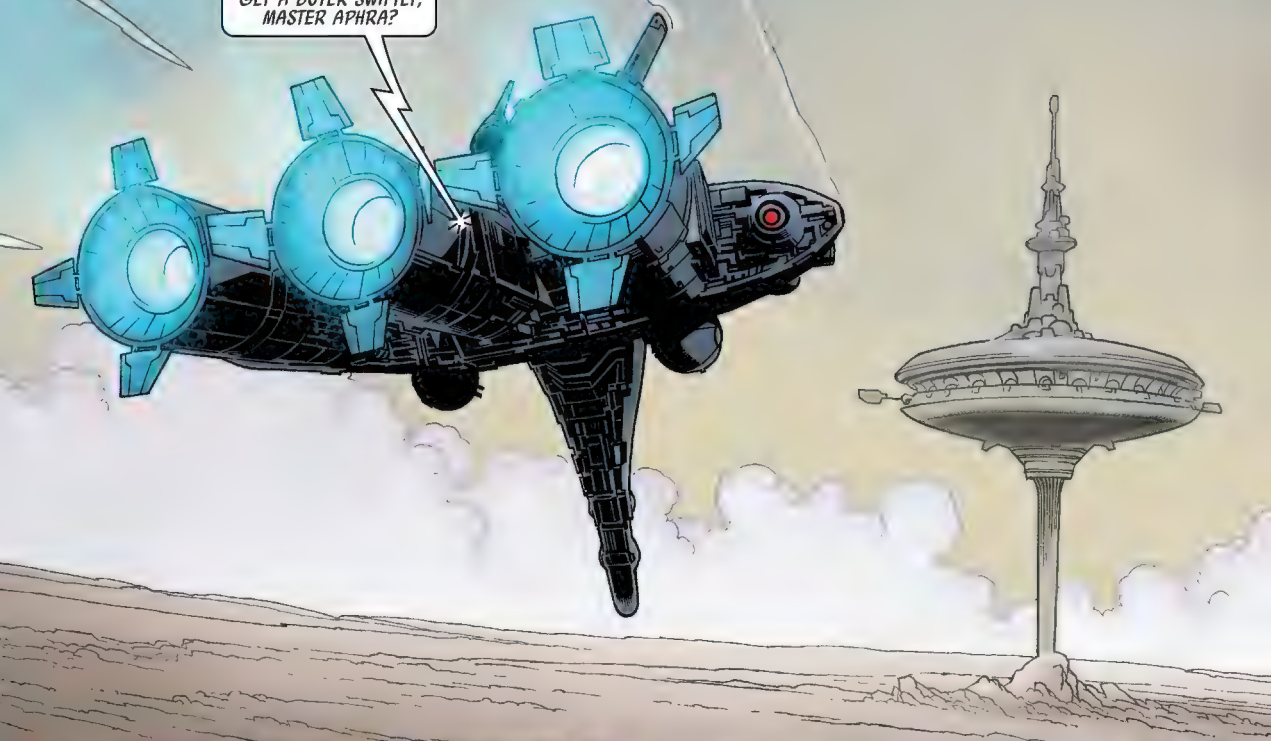
I RARELY
LET THAT
STOP ME.





Archaeo-Prime, The Cosmatanic Steppes.

DO YOU THINK YOU'LL
GET A BUYER SWIFTLY,
MASTER APHRA?



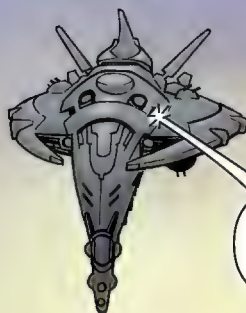
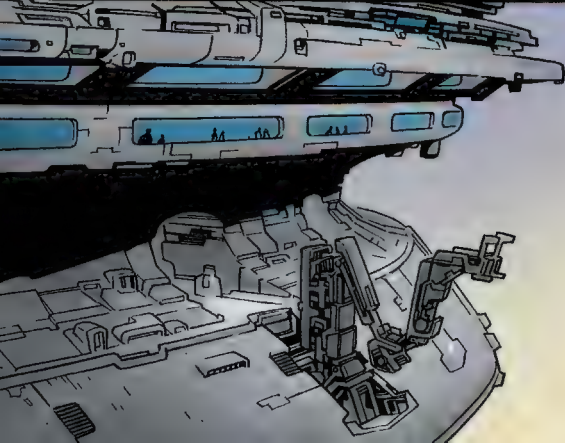
LET ME EXPLAIN
THE COSMATANIC STEPPES.
IT IS A LAYER OF MANTLE
SUSPENDED ABOVE A GAS
GIANT. IT'S BEEN A CENTER OF
ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS AND
SCAVENGING FOR THE LAST
HUNDRED YEARS OF
THE HISTORICAL
ART RUSH.

THE KEY
QUESTION? "WHAT IS
IT AND WHY IS IT HERE?"
AND MAYBE--JUST MAYBE--
THE SECRET IS IN THE
WONDERFUL LITTLE
PIECE WE FOUND.

EVERY BIG
PLAYER WILL BE
LOOKING AT ANY VERIFIED
ARTIFACT, LET ALONE
SOMETHING AS GOOD AS THIS...

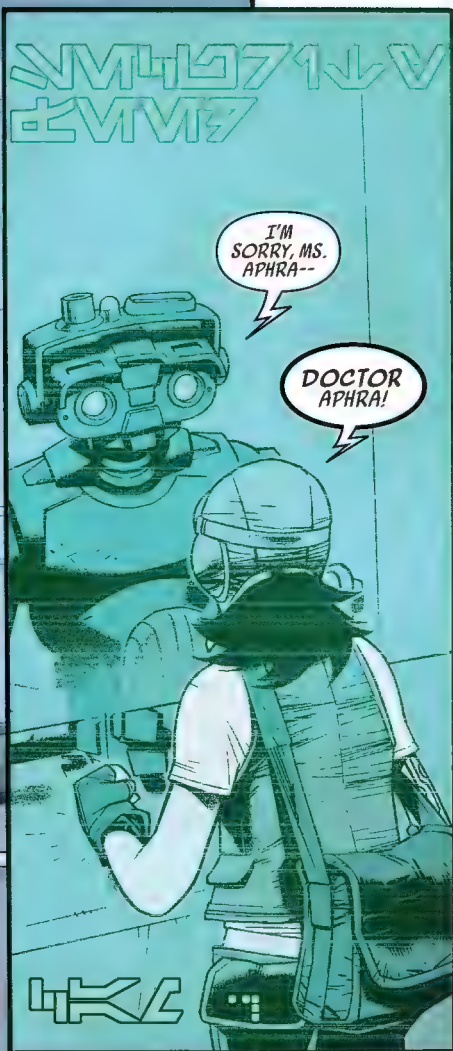


CHANCES ARE,
BY THE END OF
THE DAY, WE ARE
GOING TO BE
RICH.





WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T SELL IT?!



I'M SORRY, MS. APHRA--

DOCTOR APHRA!



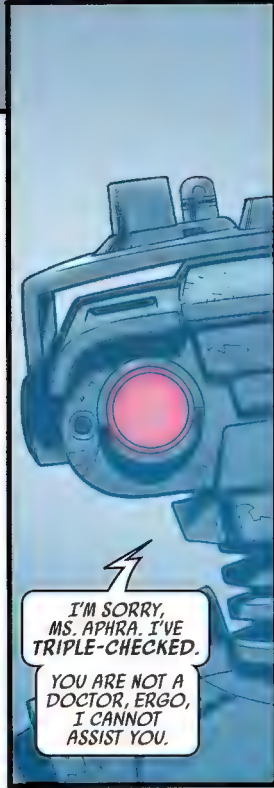
MS. APHRA FOR NOW, YOUR DOCTORATE HAS BEEN SUSPENDED.

UNTIL THE CONFUSION HAS BEEN CLEARED, THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION IS UNABLE TO VERIFY ANY OF YOUR FINDS.

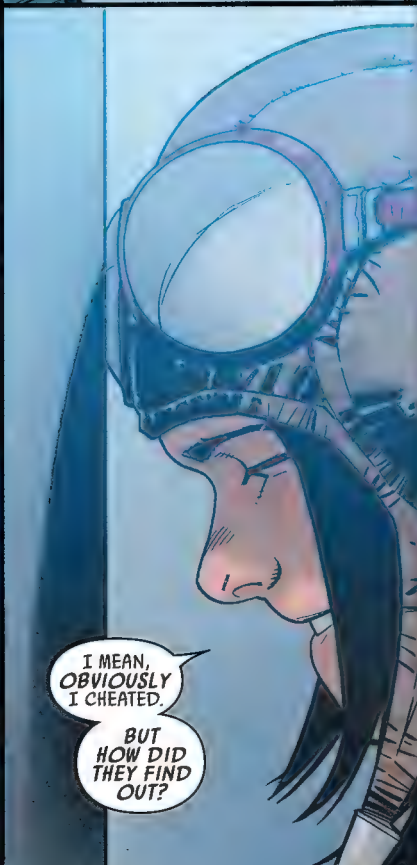


THIS HAS TO BE A MISTAKE. I RECOVERED THE ABERSYN SYMBIOTES OF BOOTHII XII!

CHECK AGAIN...



I'M SORRY, MS. APHRA. I'VE TRIPLE-CHECKED. YOU ARE NOT A DOCTOR, ERGO, I CANNOT ASSIST YOU.





...SO PERHAPS
IT'S LUCKY THAT
SOMEONE WHO LOVES
YOU WAS THE PERSON
WHO UNCOVERED
YOUR ETHICAL
LAPSE.

AND NOW WE
CAN LOOK TO
YOUR SPIRITUAL
SALVATION...



DAD.

OH.



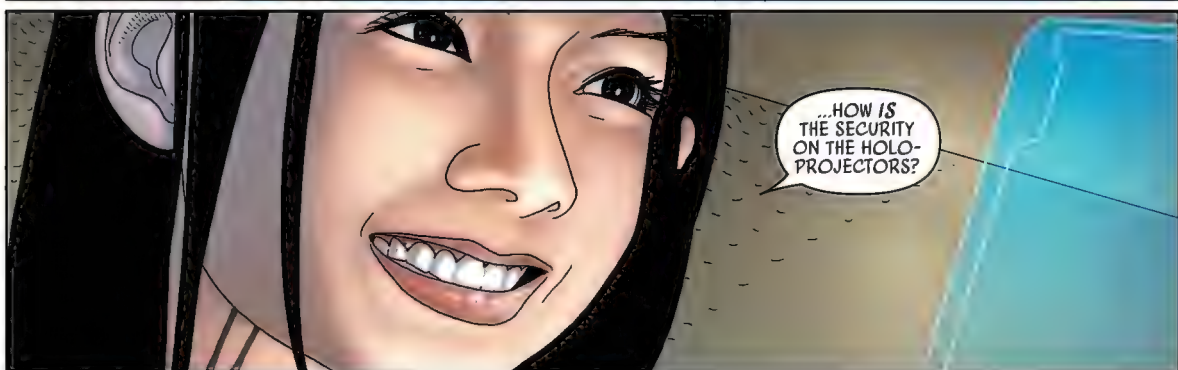
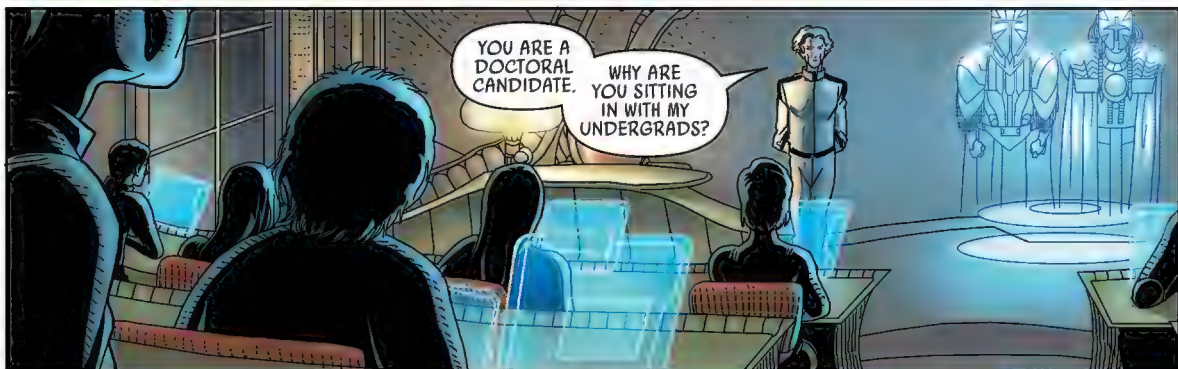
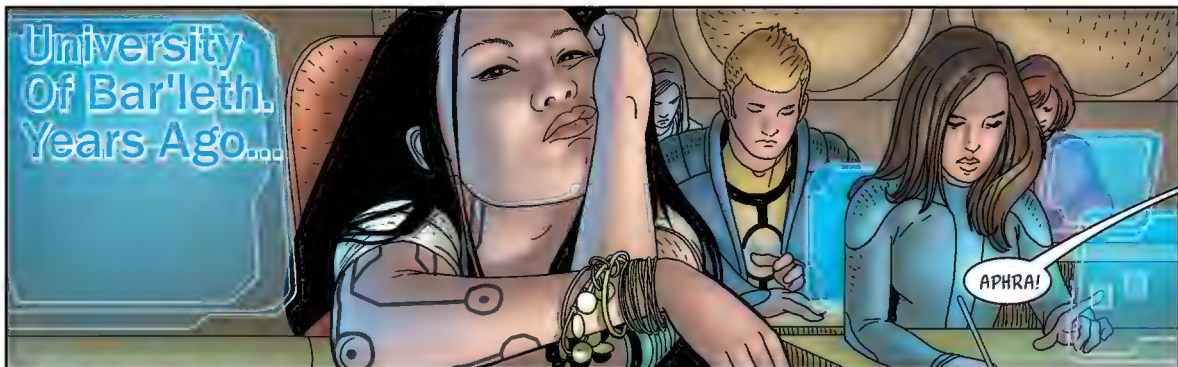
To be
continued in
**DOCTOR
APHRA #2...**

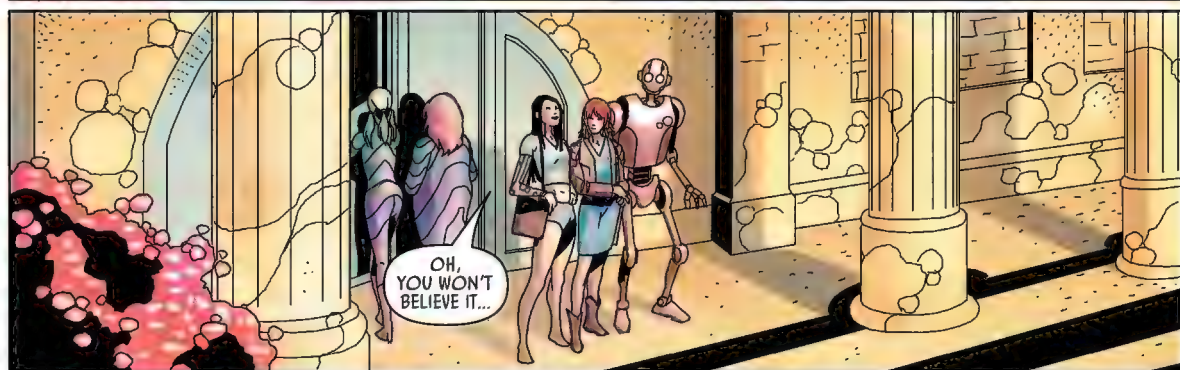
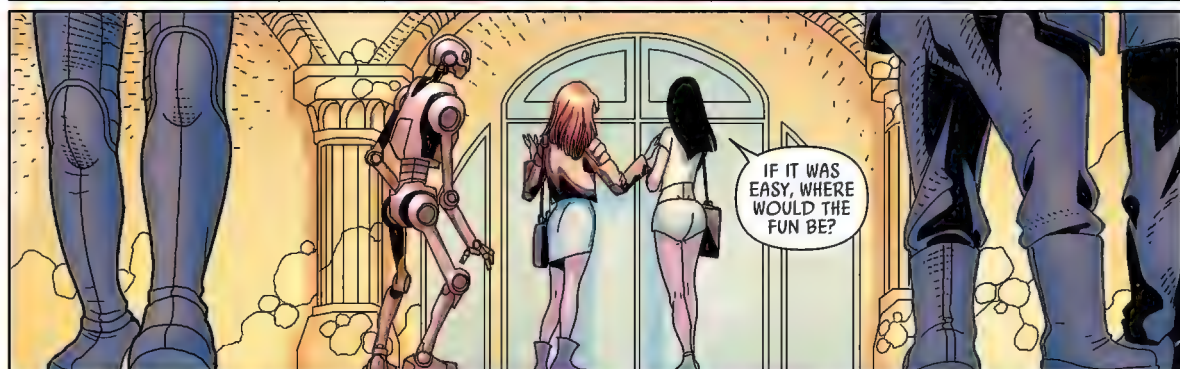
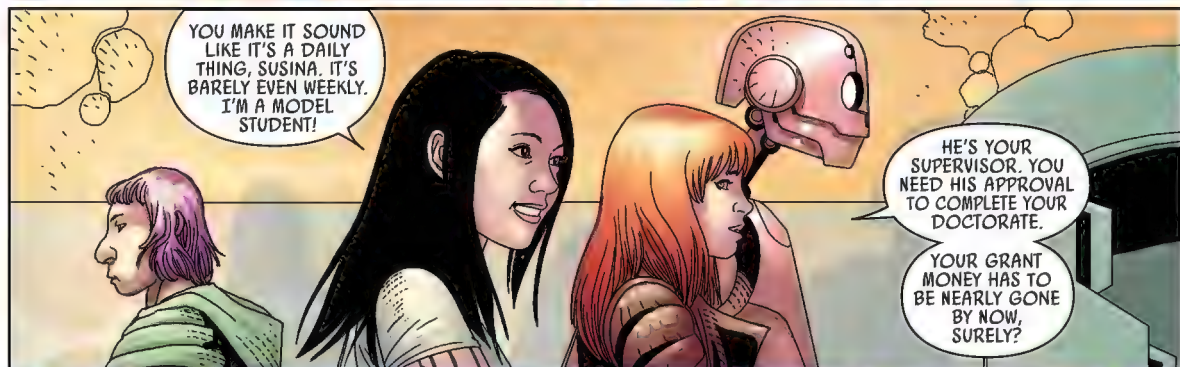
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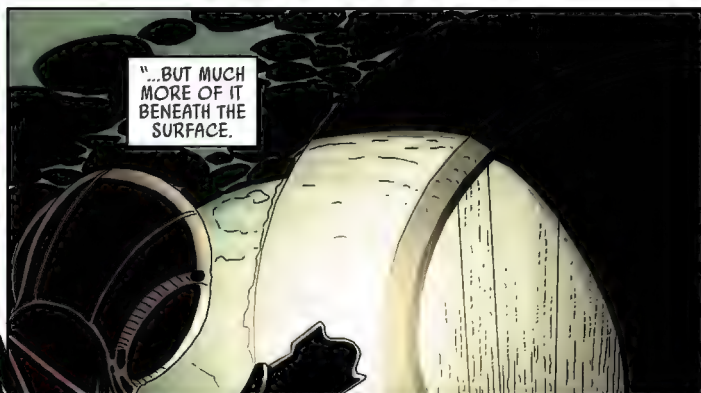






"BOOTH XII IS A PLACE WITHOUT HISTORY. FARMERS, DOING THEIR SIMPLE LIFE THING, FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

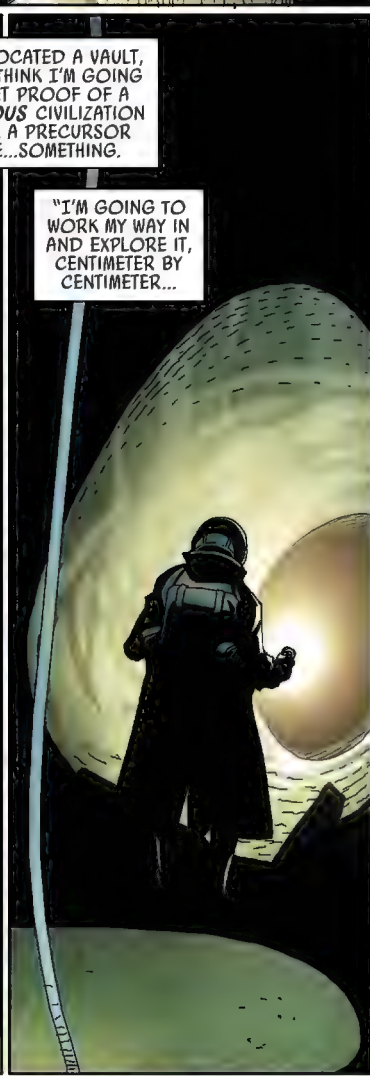
"ARCHITECTURE HASN'T CHANGED FOR LONGER THAN THE REPUBLIC EXISTED...



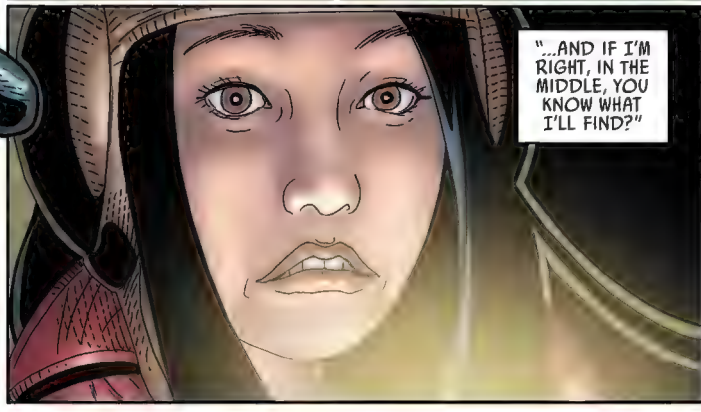
"...BUT MUCH MORE OF IT BENEATH THE SURFACE.



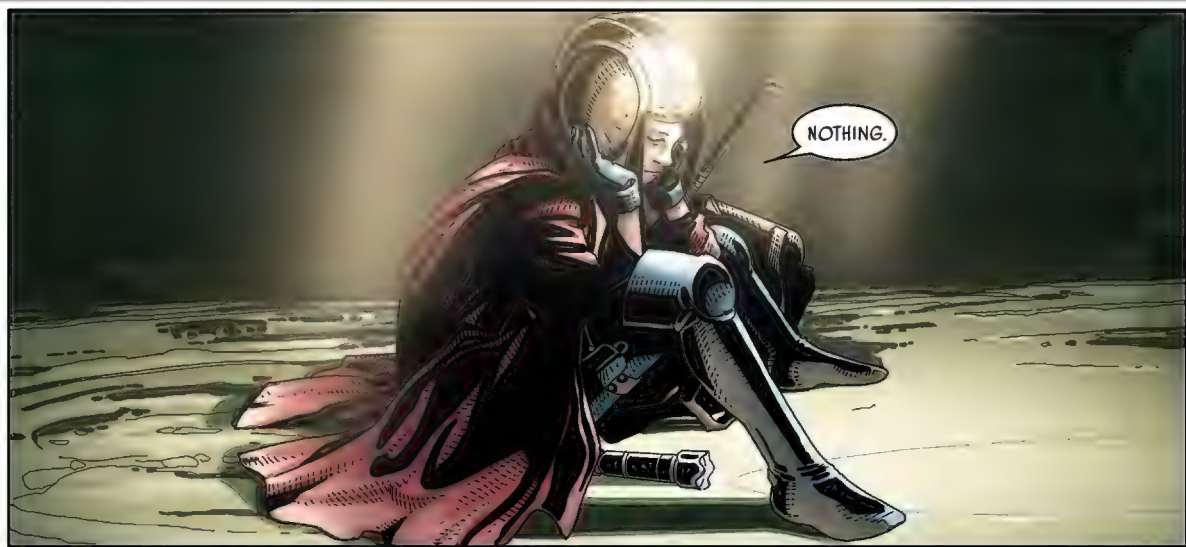
"I'VE LOCATED A VAULT, AND I THINK I'M GOING TO GET PROOF OF A **PREVIOUS** CIVILIZATION THERE. A PRECURSOR RACE... SOMETHING.

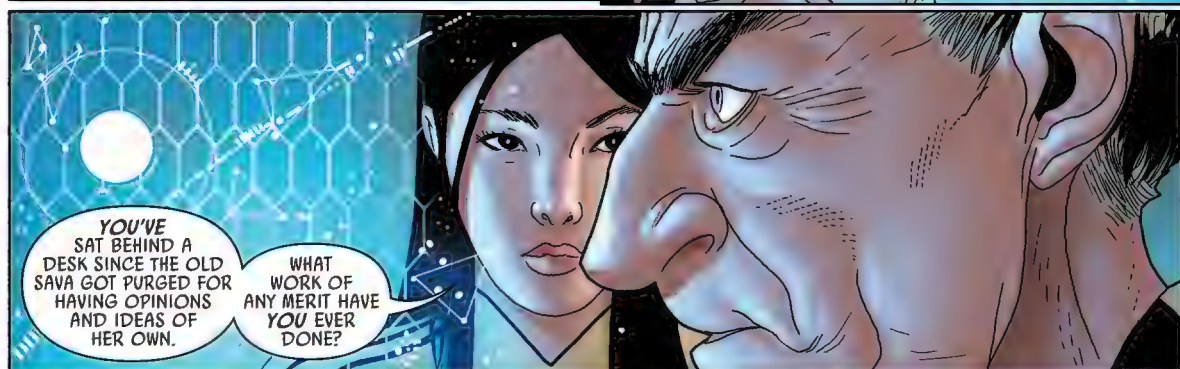
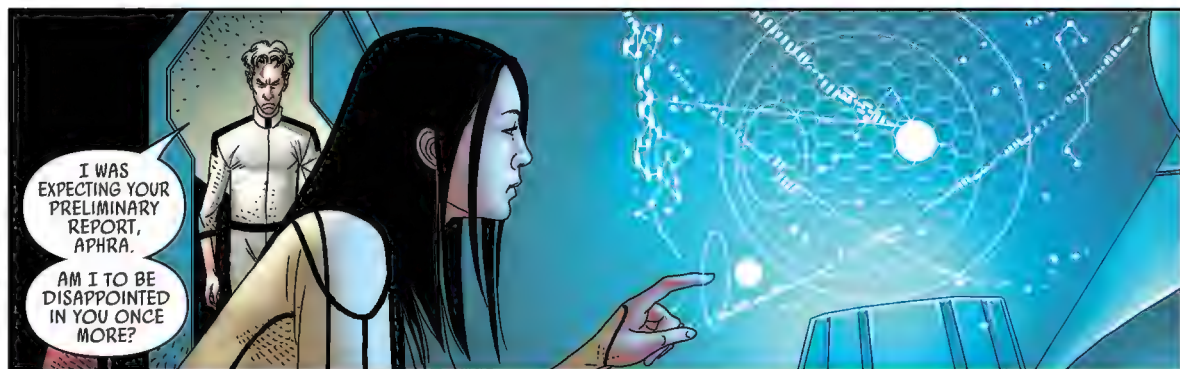


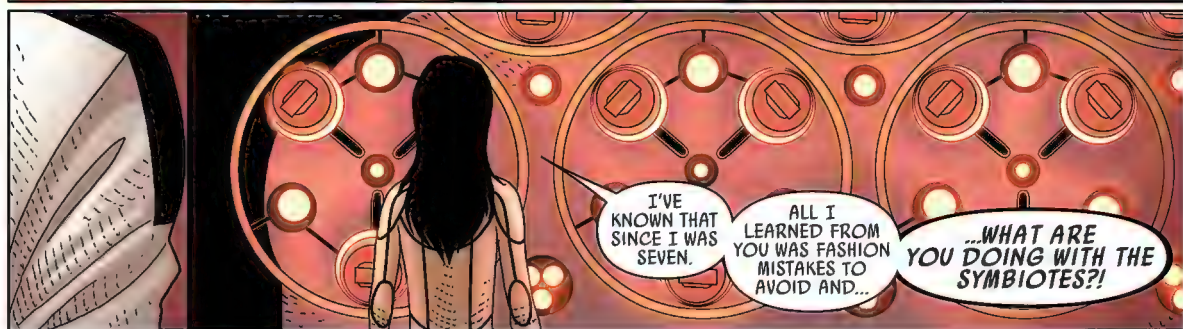
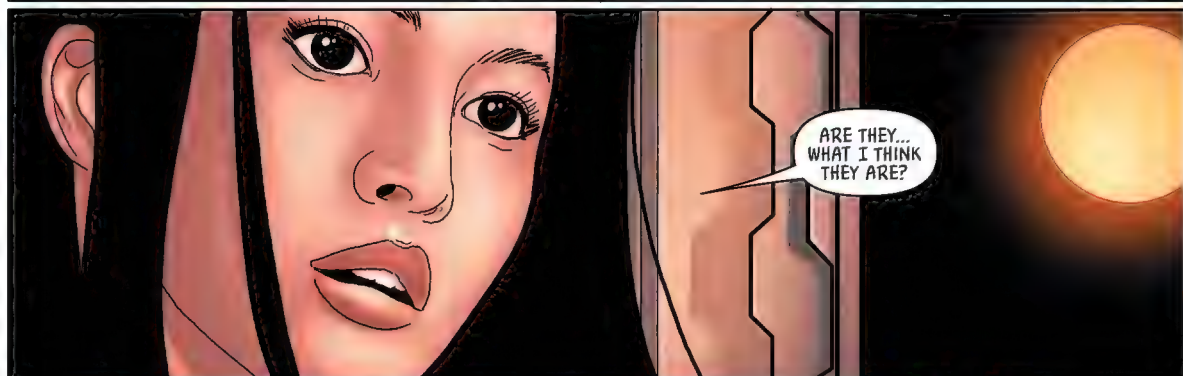
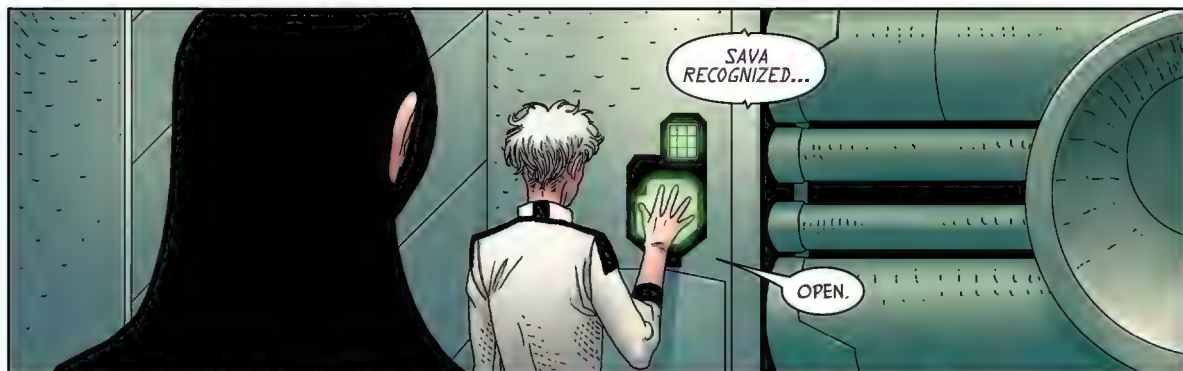
"I'M GOING TO WORK MY WAY IN AND EXPLORE IT, CENTIMETER BY CENTIMETER..."

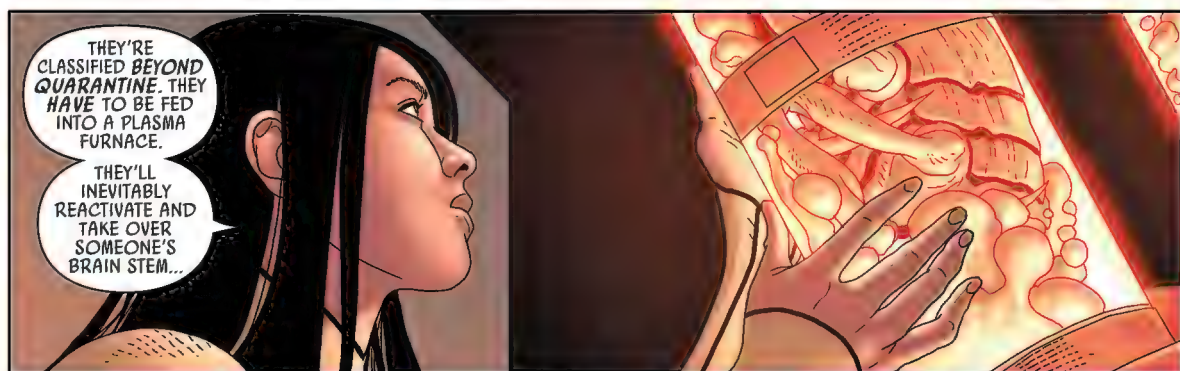


"...AND IF I'M RIGHT, IN THE MIDDLE, YOU KNOW WHAT I'LL FIND?"









THEY'RE CLASSIFIED *BEYOND QUARANTINE*. THEY HAVE TO BE FED INTO A PLASMA FURNACE.

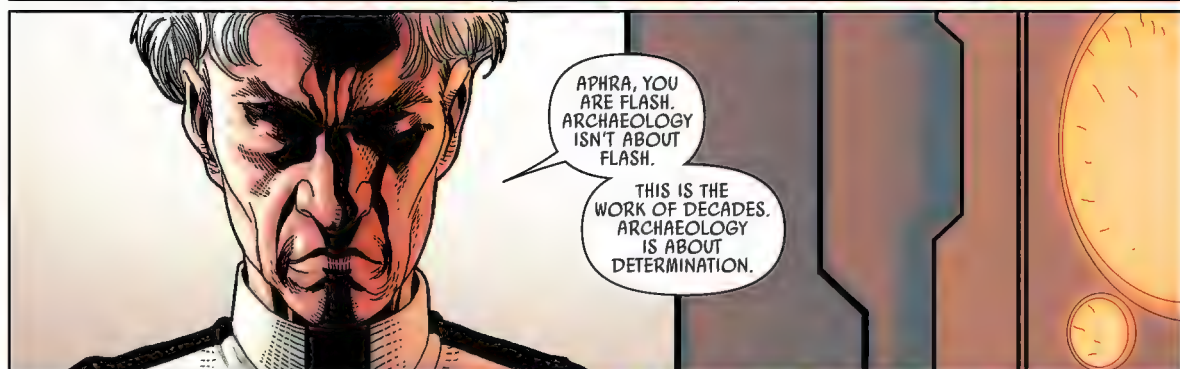
THEY'LL INEVITABLY REACTIVATE AND TAKE OVER SOMEONE'S BRAIN STEM...



COWARDICE. REGULAR PLASMA VENT EXPOSURE RENDERS THEM QUIESCENT.

THEY'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF MANY HISTORICAL EMPIRES, AND I'M NOT THROWING AWAY THE CHANCE TO STUDY THEM.

WHY ARE YOU SHOWING ME THIS?



APHRA, YOU ARE FLASH. ARCHAEOLOGY ISN'T ABOUT FLASH.

THIS IS THE WORK OF DECADES. ARCHAEOLOGY IS ABOUT DETERMINATION.



ALL THOSE YEARS MOCKING ME, YOU NEVER THOUGHT TO ASK WHY I SELECTED YOU FOR MY DOCTORAL SUPERVISION...

BECAUSE I WAS NEVER GOING TO LET SOMEONE LIKE YOU BE A DOCTOR.

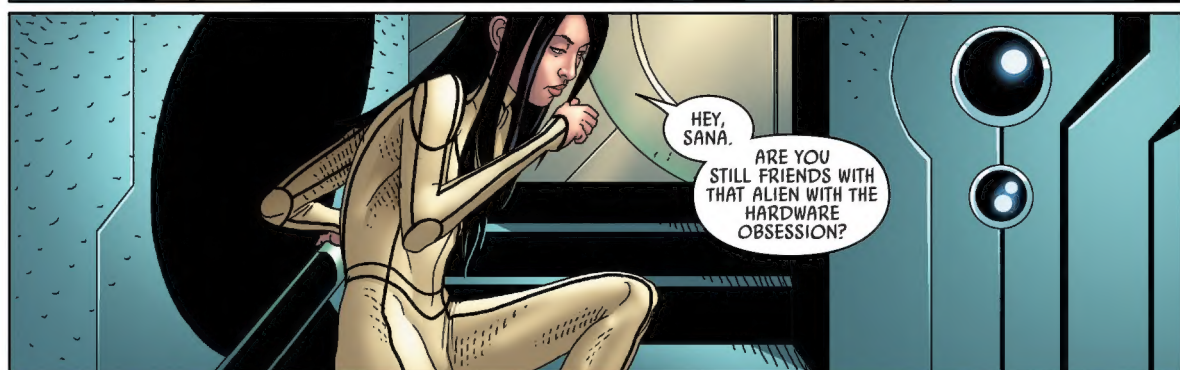


NOT BECAUSE OF MY STANDARDS.

NOT BECAUSE YOUR WORK IS SLOPPY.



JUST BECAUSE I HATE YOU.



Two Days
Later...

SIR!
AMAZING
NEWS.

APHRA'S
FINDINGS ON
BOOTH XII. IT'S...
UNPRECEDENTED.
I CAN'T BELIEVE
IT!

A
VAULT FULL
OF ABERSYN
SYMBIOTES.

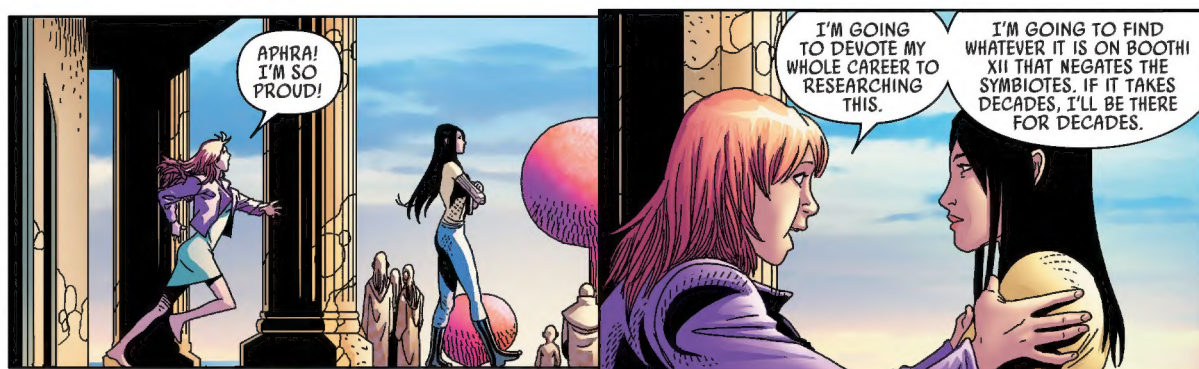
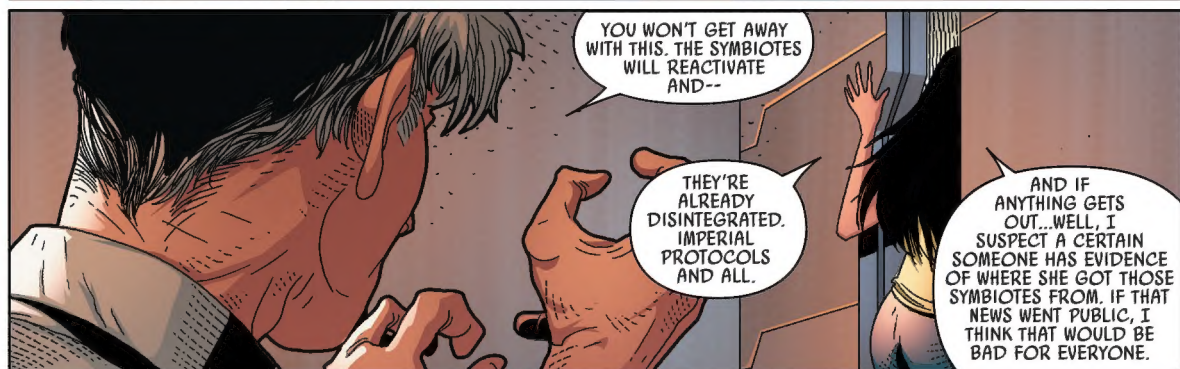
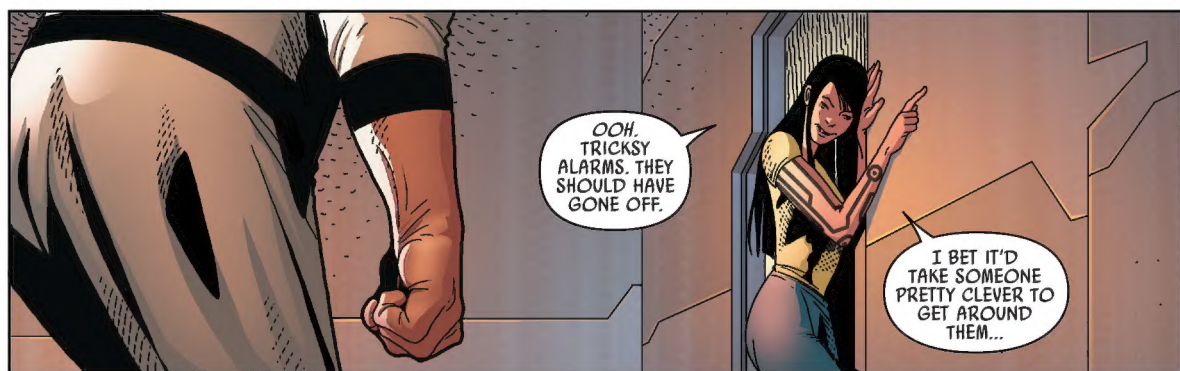
QUIESCENT
ABERSYN
SYMBIOTES.

THE VAULT HADN'T BEEN OPENED
FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. THEY
SHOULD HAVE REACTIVATED AND
ESCAPED. THERE MUST BE SOMETHING
ABOUT BOOTH XII THAT RENDERS
THEM INERT, OR SOME KIND OF
ANCIENT HISTORICAL TREATMENT
OR SOMETHING...

THIS IS THE
BIGGEST FIND IN
ARCHAEOXENOBIOLGY
IN CENTURIES!

EXCUSE
ME.

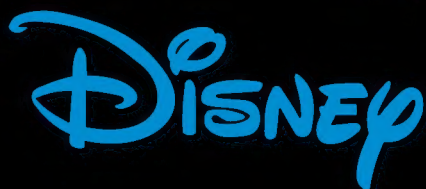
NICE
EMPTY VAULT,
SIR.



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